United Nations A/57/PV.20

General Assembly
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Official Records

20th plenary meeting
Friday, 27 September 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jan Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 20

Admission of new Members to the United Nations (rule 136)

Application for admission (A/56/953)

Letter from the President of the Security Council (A/57/258)

Draft resolution (A/57/L.3)

The President: I should like to invite the General Assembly to consider, under item 20 of the agenda, entitled "Admission of new Members to the United Nations", the positive recommendation by the Security Council on the application for admission to membership in the United Nations of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

The Security Council has recommended the admission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to membership in the United Nations, as stated in document A/57/258. In this connection, a draft resolution has been submitted in document A/57/L.3.

I now would like to give the floor to the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, His Excellency Mr. José Manuel Durão Barroso, to introduce draft resolution A/57/L.3.

Mr. José Manuel Durão Barroso, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Durão Barroso (Portugal): Timor-Leste is a triumph of the human spirit. It is also proof that adversity can always be overcome and that, in the end, justice prevails. As a Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa, noted,

(*spoke in Portuguese*)

"Everything is worthwhile when the soul is not small."

(*spoke in English*)

The Timorese people have shown us that they are true to the basic values we all believe in and that are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Today, Timor-Leste is becoming a Member State of the United Nations, although it must be said that the people of Timor-Leste have long been with us.

Timor-Leste reminds us that the United Nations Charter reaffirms our collective faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. To these ends, we have committed ourselves to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. This is the way for a new Member State to deal with the world at large and, in turn, for all of us to deal with the new Member State of Timor-Leste. In looking at

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you, people of Timor-Leste, we are looking at ourselves.

Today, we are also paying a fitting tribute to the work of the United Nations in Timor-Leste. This is a success story. It is also proof that in situations of conflict the United Nations can make a difference for the better, provided it is fully supported by Member States. It would only be fair to thank, in particular, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his determination and single-mindedness in pursuing the right path — the path of freedom and peace. Timor-Leste and the international community owe him a great deal.

The fate of Timor-Leste is now in the hands of the Timorese and their elected President, Xanana Gusmão. I would like also to recognize the presence among us of Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta and the Bishop of Dili, Dom Ximenes Belo. This is truly an impressive delegation. We have today in the General Assembly three Nobel Peace Prize winners — including Secretary-General Annan — and one Sakharov Prize winner. No better tribute could be paid to the work of the United Nations in Timor-Leste.

The new country still needs the support of the international community. For Timor-Leste, joining the United Nations is not the end of the road, since its very existence as a democratic and potentially prosperous State still depends on our collective solidarity. International attention to Timor-Leste should not be replaced by international indifference. Indeed, we must now ensure that we do not lose the peace.

I would now like to add a few words in Portuguese.

(*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*)

I would like to express the great honour I feel in representing the Portuguese people in a ceremony to which we attach the deepest meaning. The values that the Timorese embody are the same values that the Portuguese defended for decades, in particular in this General Assembly. It is therefore particularly gratifying for us to have worked together with the friendly nations of Australia and Indonesia on the draft resolution that we are about to adopt.

Portugal will continue to lend a friendly hand to Timor-Leste, a country with which, since the Brasilia summit, we have also been associated with in the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. Thousands of Portuguese have served in the United Nations operations in Timor-Leste and in the bilateral cooperation programmes that we began even before independence. I can assure the Assembly that the Portuguese people and the people of Timor-Leste are much closer in terms of the affection that we feel than our geographical distance would suggest. The Portuguese poet, Camões, stated, "the whole world is made of change"; but there is something that will hardly ever change: the friendship that all Portuguese feel for the people of Timor-Leste.

(*spoke in English*)

On behalf of the 135 sponsors, I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly the draft resolution contained in document A/57/L.3 and to recommend its adoption by consensus, thereby welcoming by acclamation Timor-Leste as the newest State Member of the United Nations.

Bem-vindo, Timor-Leste.

The President: Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of A/57/L.3: Armenia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Congo, Djibouti, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Tonga, Turkey and Zimbabwe.

May I take it that the General Assembly accepts the recommendation of the Security Council and adopts the draft resolution by acclamation?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/3).

The President: I therefore declare the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste admitted to membership in the United Nations.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The delegation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste was escorted to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The President: It is my great honour and privilege to welcome, on behalf of the General

Assembly, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste as a new Member of the United Nations.

Only a few months ago — on 20 May 2002 — we congratulated the first elected President of Timor-Leste, His Excellency Xanana Gusmão, and participated in the celebration of the independence of Timor-Leste. I was very happy to attend the independence ceremony in person, and appreciated the fact that I had the opportunity to have a short conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Jose Ramos-Horta. As a former human rights activist and a fighter for the independence of my own country, I bow in respect and salute the courage and determination of the President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other East-Timorese whose struggle brought about the success we can celebrate today.

Timor-Leste is the first independent State and nation to have emerged in the twenty-first century. We have all watched with admiration how the people of Timor-Leste progressed towards their independence. We all remember the developments that led to the country's independence. It was not easy, but the country and its people succeeded. I am very proud and happy that the United Nations was an integral part of that whole process.

Despite numerous difficulties and barriers, the United Nations Mission in East Timor and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, confirmed that United Nations participation was the right way to help ensure a smooth transition to the status of an independent and sovereign State.

The peaceful transition process in Timor-Leste was a prime example of the ability of the Security Council and the United Nations to respond promptly and decisively to pressing issues.

Timor-Leste's independence, however, does not mark the end of United Nations involvement. On the contrary, it signals the beginning of an important new phase to consolidate the achievements and to build on them. The establishment of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor is one of the examples of such engagement.

The United Nations and its Member States should be prepared to strengthen their support to the region and to the Government of Timor-Leste. They should help in addressing the many remaining issues that need to be resolved. Timor-Leste will, for example, need a fully functioning infrastructure to enable it to earn sufficient revenue so as not to need to rely on continuous aid in the future.

We wish the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and its people peace, prosperity and every success in their future and we warmly welcome Timor-Leste to the United Nations.

I now call on the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Djangone-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): The Group of African States at the United Nations fully appreciates the feelings of Timorese men and women on this historic day. It could not do otherwise, since most of the countries of our Group have known the bitter taste of colonization and undertaken national liberation struggles, along with the joy of proclaiming hard-won political independence and the pride and emotion of trading their territorial status for that of independent State and member of the family of sovereign countries within the United Nations.

The African Group therefore salutes the courage of the Timorese people who, despite the tremendous obstacles they faced in their liberation struggle, have remained resolute in their will to sunder the chains that bound them to the yoke of colonization. Through me, the African countries of the United Nations welcome the delegation of Timor-Leste, led by Mr. Xanana Gusmão, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, who is the very resolute embodiment of his people's desire for liberation. May he accept our warm and brotherly congratulations on this achievement.

The African Group also takes this opportunity to commend the remarkable work of the United Nations, and in particular that of Special Representative Sergio Vieira de Mello, in the creation of the new State.

The African Group reaffirms its support for the reconstruction and reconciliation efforts of the international community on behalf of Timor-Leste. We believe that, like a newborn child, that country must be the focus of the attention of its development partners in the international community. For its part, Africa is prepared to lend its fraternal support and cooperation. In that respect, we wish the new State peaceful

coexistence with all its neighbours so that it may devote itself fully to the country's development.

In celebrating Timor-Leste's entry into the great United Nations family, the African Group would remind everyone that we are in the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and that there remain 16 non-self-governing territories on the list of territories still to be decolonized. Let us therefore strive, like Timor-Leste, to rid the world of colonialism in the twenty-first century.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am honoured and privileged to speak today on behalf of the Asian Group to welcome an Asian country to the United Nations family. We are extremely pleased to have among us the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, led by President Xanana Gusmão. We offer our most sincere congratulations to President Gusmão and through him to the people and Government of East Timor on their country's admission today to the United Nations. It is a pleasant moment for all of us to witness the independence of Timor-Leste through the central political role of the United Nations and the commendable cooperation and support of its Member States.

Our Group is very much aware that there are many pressing needs and priorities for the new nation of East Timor. We are encouraged by the wisdom and foresight of the leadership as well as the people of Timor-Leste, who have adopted a forward-looking attitude. We in the Asian Group welcome the excellent and fast-growing relations between Timor-Leste and other countries in the region, particularly Indonesia. Undoubtedly, ongoing and timely international support and cooperation are imperative to enable post-independence Timor-Leste to make quick and steady progress.

Once again, I would like to express our best wishes to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on this significant event and to wish the Government and people of Timor-Leste peace, prosperity and a bright future.

The President: I now call on the representative of Ukraine to speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States and my own country, Ukraine, I have the honour and great pleasure to congratulate the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on its admission to the United Nations.

The attainment of independence by Timor-Leste marked the culmination of a long process of self-determination and transition. On 20 May, history was made in Dili as the Timorese celebrated the birth of their country — the first independent nation of the new millennium.

Great progress has been made over the past two and a half years in establishing the foundations of the State, in particular in the political and security spheres. The Timorese has set an example through their steadfast adherence to the core values of the United Nations Charter, to reconciliation and to the creation of democratic institutions aimed at safeguarding human rights and values.

In May, all of us in the General Assembly congratulated the East Timorese Government and people on their attainment of independence. We paid tribute to the leaders of Timor-Leste for their efforts in achieving that goal.

The United Nations has played a crucial role in restoring peace to that nation and in building a solid basis for a democratic, viable and stable State. Let me express our deepest appreciation to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Sergio Vieira de Mello, as well as to the Governments of Australia and Indonesia, for their efforts to make this possible. We commend the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor for the important work it has done to assist the people of Timor-Leste to develop a sustainable social system. Their work constitutes a vivid example of the Organization's ability to tackle the hardest tasks and achieve tangible results. The unique challenges of the Timor-Leste transition have also provided an opportunity for our Organization and its Member States to put into practice new approaches to peacekeeping and to post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction.

Today's historic occasion fills our hearts with pride, dignity and joy. Let me welcome the Democratic

Republic of Timor-Leste, congratulate the Group of Asian States and wish the Government and the people of Timor-Leste every success, and prosperity and peace.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Irma Loemban Tobing-Klein, Permanent Representative of Suriname, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mrs. Loemban Tobing-Klein (Suriname): Especially today, on such a wonderful occasion — the admittance of a new Member to the greatest family of nations — we should extend peace and love to one another and to the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in the light of the peace message that the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly presented to us last Friday on the eve of 21 September, the International Day of Peace, when we, the international community, applauded the United Nations call for a global ceasefire and non-violence.

On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I am very pleased to wholeheartedly welcome the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste as the new, 191st State Member of the United Nations. The East Timorese people fought a hard battle to gain their independence. We can only suspect that, after such a struggle, the people of Timor-Leste will work even harder to safeguard their democratic independence and their human rights, for they know what it means to strive for a nation in which justice, democracy and human rights rule.

We also commend the international community, in particular the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal, the United Nations, the Secretary-General and the United Nations administration in Timor-Leste, for assisting Timor-Leste to become an independent nation. The people of Timor-Leste have thus had an excellent introduction to, and experience with, our Organization and our family of nations, which work to improve the life of each of our people and each of their people, and to promote a life of dignity.

The Governments and the peoples of all countries members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group congratulate the Government, the people and the President of Timor-Leste at this great milestone and express the wish and the prayer that peace and love may prevail every day, everywhere, under all circumstances.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gonçalo de Santa Clara Gomes, the representative of Portugal, to speak on behalf of the Western European and other States.

Mr. De Santa Clara Gomes (Portugal): It is for me a great honour to address the Assembly as Chairman of the Western European and other States Group, upon the admission of Timor-Leste as a State Member of the United Nations.

This meeting today is the culmination of a long and difficult process through which the Timorese people chose to be independent and to live according to the principles that we in this Organization cherish the most: democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. I am sure that Timor-Leste's membership in the United Nations will contribute to the efforts of the Organization to strengthen those principles around the world.

Timorese involvement with the United Nation is not new. We have all supported, we have all participated in and we have all followed with intense emotion the joint effort that the United Nations and the Timorese have made to bring this new country into the international community. The presence here today of a distinguished delegation from Timor-Leste is evidence of that country's continued commitment to the United Nations. The members of the Group of Western European and other States look forward to working closely with the Timorese authorities and their representatives here.

I would like to conclude by paying a special tribute to President Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, Foreign Minister José Ramos-Horta and Bishop Ximenes Belo for their role in leading Timor-Leste to independence.

I must also extend warm appreciation to the Secretary-General for his personal engagement in the process that led to this new membership. As the Timorese flag is raised today, we will all have reason to be proud.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. James Cunningham, representative of the United States of America, the host country.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): Last May we celebrated the rise of the Timorese people from the ashes of conflict and their creation of an independent nation. Today we celebrate that nation's

accession to its rightful place in the meeting house of mankind, the United Nations.

On behalf of the United States, it gives me great pleasure to offer Timor-Leste a warm welcome to United Nations membership. This day is made all the more profound by the close and unique relationship Timor-Leste has had with the United Nations. Through the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor and now the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor, the United Nations and its membership have done much to help the Timorese people in their hard-fought quest for freedom.

The United States is proud to have been able to play a part in that success. United States assistance to Timor-Leste stands at $25 million annually, and it is one of our largest bilateral aid programmes in the world on a per capita basis. In truth, Timor-Leste would never have reached the milestone we mark today without the tenacity and the spirit of its people. It is those same great people who are now taking the reigns of their new freedom and are working for a brighter future.

We applaud the Timorese Government for its efforts to build a nation that can stand on its own two feet. We welcome its work towards a nation that enjoys open, inclusive democracy, a market economy, a just legal system and harmonious relations with its neighbours. We encourage that work to continue.

Finally, let me reiterate the commitment of the United States to close, cooperative relations with Timor-Leste. We will be with you, the people of Timor-Leste, as you forge your own future and as you carve out your own place in the community of nations. Welcome, friends.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): As it is for the people of East Timor today, it is an emotional moment here for the people of Australia as well. On behalf of the Government and the people of Australia, we want to welcome Timor-Leste into the United Nations family.

It is a special honour for me today to have jointly sponsored, with colleagues from Portugal and Indonesia, resolution 57/3, which formalizes Timor-Leste's United Nations membership. That Timor-Leste stands here today as a United Nations Member State is, more than anything else, testament to the resolve, strength and courage of the East Timorese people, and it is a great pleasure for us all to see such an impressive delegation from East Timor with us today. It points also to the exceptional work of the United Nations and of United-Nations-authorized missions. This has been a great success story for the United Nations, and it is fitting therefore that Timor-Leste should join the Organization that was crucial in bringing stability, order and renewed hope to its people.

Australia will continue to play a leading role in the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor and as a bilateral friend and partner to Timor-Leste. We appeal to others in the international community to remain committed as well.

Australia and Timor-Leste are neighbours forever. From our perspective, we will always be good neighbours.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): Allow me to begin by expressing our sincerest appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this historic meeting of the General Assembly to admit the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste as the 191st Member of the United Nations. On this glorious occasion for the Government and the people of the newborn State, we are deeply honoured to share in their moment of joy. Indeed, the presence of President Xanana Gusmão in our midst today lends powerful expression to this momentous occasion, as his country takes its rightful place among the community of nations.

As Timor-Leste's closest neighbour, Indonesia would like to express its sincere congratulations to its Government and its people. Indonesia is, of course, proud to have been one the initiators, together with Australia and Portugal, of the draft resolution to admit East Timor as a Member of the United Nations.

Four months ago, on the eve of Timor-Leste's independence, President Megawati Soekarnoputri visited Dili to help cement the new and promising relationship between our two countries. Likewise, the State visit of President Xanana Gusmão to Jakarta in early July this year greatly helped strengthen that growing bond. Since those two milestone visits, our countries have embarked on a strong partnership, which is evident in the increasing number of concrete and mutually beneficial achievements. One such event

that has greatly bolstered the new relationship is the establishment of the Joint Commission, a forum for discussing pertinent issues and searching for mutually beneficial answers to issues of common interest.

In a similar vein, I see continuing progress in such undertakings as my Government's initiative to hold the first ministerial meeting of the Southwest Pacific Dialogue. That dialogue, which will take place early next month, is designed to facilitate the discussion of issues of common interest and concern to Indonesia, Timor-Leste and four other friendly countries on issues such as economic cooperation and transnational crime, including terrorism and people-smuggling.

All those steps are part of a number of tangible efforts to build stronger relationships bilaterally and regionally between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, which will augur well for the future. The courage of the leaders and the peoples of both countries to step forward to construct a future on the basis of those objectives should be applauded. We are confident that the international community cherishes the new and forward-looking spirit of cooperation. However, we are fully aware that our brothers and sisters in Timor-Leste are facing daunting challenges, especially in the areas of capacity-building, education, health and other basic services, and, of course, poverty eradication. To that end, Indonesia is ready to extend its collaboration, including through South-South cooperation.

In conclusion, let me once again, on behalf of the Government and people of Indonesia, express our sincere congratulations and best wishes to the Government and people of East Timor on this auspicious occasion.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, who will speak on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) to welcome Timor-Leste into this Organization. Ours is a warm and wholehearted welcome from countries that, beyond a common language and culture, also share with Timor-Leste a firm commitment to the principles of democracy, liberty, justice, peace and universalism.

The country's admission into the membership of the United Nations represents another accomplishment of the brave Timorese people in their long, heroic struggle for self-determination. The accession of Timor-Leste is one more accomplishment in the success story that this Organization helped to bring about. Barely five months ago, we were gathering in the Security Council to celebrate its independence. More recently, in July, Brazil had the honour of hosting a summit of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, in which our Community had the pleasure of receiving Timor-Leste in our midst.

The admission of new Members is a special moment for the Organization itself, a moment in which we rekindle the wishes and hopes placed in the United Nations as an effective instrument for the resolution of challenges that lie ahead, especially those which, given the global scope, can be addressed only through multilateral channels. It is also a confirmation of the universality of the values that brought us together and, in that sense, the confirmation of our commitments to these values.

In the case of Timor-Leste, though, this is complemented by a feeling of accomplishment and of having contributed to this Organization through the very existence of the partner we now welcome into our collective home. The critical role played by the United Nations in the historic birth of an independent Timor-Leste is a vivid example that the United Nations can harness political will and resources — financial and human resources — effectively, thus making a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable.

The story of the independence of Timor-Leste must serve as an inspiration for us to muster the will to tackle the challenges that remain on the international agenda. The remarkable achievement of independence does not conclude the obligations of the international community towards that country. The tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations in Timor-Leste are far from over. The success of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) will require the same level of political commitment that characterized the support of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Timor-Leste is a developing country in need of international assistance. In this context, it becomes even more pressing to continue to bring in income-generating projects, maintain the flow of international aid and create the conditions for sustainable development.

Within the means available, the member countries of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries will continue to provide support for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of Timor-Leste, bearing in mind the need for financial, material and technical assistance.

Before concluding, Sir, allow me to pay tribute to my fellow countryman, Sergio Vieira de Mello, who, while serving as the head of UNTAET, played a crucial role on the road to Timor-Leste's independence. Under his competent guidance, an unprecedented success in the history of the United Nations has been achieved.

A word of recognition and admiration also is due to President Xanana Gusmão, a hero in the struggle for independence, who has now been trusted with the task of guiding Timor-Leste in its early steps as a full member of the international community. We also want to salute Prime Minister Alkatiri, Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta and Bishop Belo, remarkable leaders of a brave people.

Welcome, Timor-Leste.

(*spoke in Portuguese*)

Welcome, Timor-Leste.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Lucia, Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

Mr. Huntley (Saint Lucia): As Chair of the Special Committee of 24 on decolonization, I have the honour to welcome the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the membership of this Organization and to convey the profound pleasure of the members of the Committee in so doing.

On this day, momentous for the people of East Timor, we cannot help but recall the years when their representatives appeared time and again before the Special Committee here in New York to present their case for decolonization. We admire and respect the resolve of the people of Timor-Leste in search of their objective.

And so, today, as they are finally free to take their seat as an independent State in the United Nations family, we believe that, with similar purposefulness, their contribution to our deliberations will enrich this body.

In welcoming the newest nation into the halls of the United Nations, we should not forget that Timor-Leste is still in the infancy of its development and nation-building. The international community has played an important role in the long journey of the East Timorese to full membership in the United Nations. Both the international community and the United Nations must now be a part of the process of the development of the new nation and assist this process by providing unremitting and generous support. Helping Timor-Leste to stand on its own as a viable economy is a debt that we owe its people.

Today is also a significant day for the members of the Special Committee of 24, for it marks the confirmation of the removal of one more territory from its list of non-self-governing territories. The de-listing of Timor-Leste has left 16 other non-self-governing territories on the list of the Special Committee as territories yet to exercise their right to self-determination. The majority of these are very small islands, and because they are islands that are so small, and so remote, we sense that the international community prefers to remain indifferent to them.

Let us not let the special circumstances or the fading of the glamour that marked the United Nations' decolonization drive four decades ago obscure the right to self-determination of these territories. Secretary-General Kofi Annan reminded us earlier this year that there should be no room for colonialism in the twenty-first century and that all efforts should be made to close this chapter of history once and for all.

I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Special Committee, to encourage all Administering Powers to work hand in hand with the Special Committee of 24 to attain this goal. In doing so, however, we must remember that what must be of cardinal importance is that the freely expressed wishes and the interests of the people of those territories must always be paramount in determining their future mode of governance out of the three options prescribed by the United Nations. To do otherwise would be to sow the seeds of conflict.

Therefore, as we welcome Timor-Leste here today, let us do so with a commitment renewed by the joy of this occasion to ensure that within this Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the peoples of the remaining non-self-governing territories shall also peacefully exercise their

right to self-determination with the full support of the international community.

And so I say again: congratulations and welcome, Timor-Leste, welcome!

Address by Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the great pleasure to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, His Excellency Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President Gusmão (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): Since the 1960s, Timor-Leste had been on the list of non-self-governing territories, with the right to exercise self-determination and independence in accordance with its people's aspirations for freedom. Many countries have in fact achieved their independence since that time.

The universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations were the points of reference for our actions, both as part of the resistance within the country and during the long journey made with confidence and determination by the Timorese people side by side with the peoples of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and Sao Tome and Principe, and with activists from all over the world. Human rights and the fundamental right of peoples to decide their own destinies are an expression of the struggle for the emancipation of every human being as an individual, as part of a society and, of course, as a people — in this case, as the Timorese people that we are proud to be.

In this great Hall of the peoples of the entire world, where peoples are heard through their representatives and where we had the privilege of attending the Millennium Assembly, since 1975, Timor-Leste has been present in minds and hearts, in political debates, in geo-strategic discussions and in the resolutions adopted. Timorese diplomats — led by the guerrilla of diplomacy, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mr. Jose Ramos-Horta — heads of State or Government, the representatives of friendly nations and of organizations of international solidarity worked tirelessly as they roamed the corridors of this home of the community of nations. During the terms of office of Kurt Waldheim, Javier Pérez de Cuellar, Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan, the Security Council, the Special Committee of 24, the Commission on Human Rights and others have kept their doors open to listen to the voice of the people of Timor-Leste.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan decisively took into his hands not only the suffering but, above all, the aspirations of our people. People such as Francesc Vendrell and Tamrat Samuel, who worked on the question of Timor-Leste from the outset, as well as, subsequently, Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, deserve our appreciation along with other staff members of this institution. They exemplified dedication and promoted dialogue in the search for a solution. The outcome of that effort to defend the Charter and the freedom of peoples was the Agreement of 5 May 1999.

It is often said that it is important to start a process because doing so entails defining intentions and objectives. But, particularly in a struggle, the true value of action and work is found in the results. The popular consultation carried out by the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) under the leadership of Ian Martin was the first democratic and conscientious act of our people. First, it was conscientious because it was conducted in a totally adverse and uncontrollable climate. Secondly, it was conscientious because it revealed to the world the courage of the people of Timor-Leste. And, lastly, it was conscientious because our people rejected violence, the idea of conflict between brothers and the notion of civil war.

Our people struggled for their freedom for more than two decades. The long and difficult struggle attained its objectives, and the people of Timor-Leste were not overly concerned by the use of violence and the perpetuation of the conflict. The day of liberation, 30 August 1999, was the day of democracy. Since that day, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, led by Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, has made every effort to strengthen the democratic awareness of our people as the basis for genuine independence. As a consequence, on 30 August 2001

the first elections were held for the Constituent Assembly, with presidential elections held in April 2002.

The presence of the Secretary-General and of more than 90 official delegations from around the world — including the current President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jan Kavan, who at the time was the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic — made 20 May 2002 a memorable day in our history. The United Nations and the international community at large did justice to the international principles and the universal values that uphold the existence of nations and peoples by recognizing their inalienable right to self-determination and national independence.

We feel greatly honoured and moved by the statesmanship shown by Portugal, Indonesia and Australia in jointly proposing the draft resolution that has admitted us as the 191st Member of the United Nations.

I have the privilege today of representing before the General Assembly a small people of great dignity and extraordinary historic bravery who are driven by a total commitment to the present and filled with great confidence for the future. Present among us as our special guest is our most beloved brother, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ximenes Belo. Despite his wish to be here today to share this moment with us, our dear friend Basilio do Nascimento had to remain in our country out of his sense of responsibility.

I represent a people who have already defined their vision for development for the next 20 years. That vision expresses their most profound aspirations with regard to the eradication of poverty and illiteracy, the achievement of better standards of living — to which every citizen has a right — and their own involvement in the development process. We are aware of the fact that there will be no economic or social development in our country if we do not establish the most elementary bases of democracy. The role of women and a strong civil society are essential to ensuring that participatory democracy at the level of local Government guarantee both social justice and the rights of citizens.

More than just coming here as the head of State, the honour I feel stems from representing the courage of the women of my country, the high spirits aroused by the sacrifice of our men, the determination of our young people and the smiles of the children of the "crocodile nation". According to our legend, today we have been transformed. We tread firmly on our land and sail safely through our sea, for we have been recognized as a sovereign and independent nation and as a member of the international community.

Having emerged from decades of struggle for our independence and 20 years of suffering, what our people most yearn for now is peace and stability. Only a tolerant and just society can create a climate of much-needed stability, and only a tolerant and just society will know how to love peace.

Timor-Leste expresses its concern over the increasing violence in the Middle East. We will not point fingers or attempt to identify culprits. We prefer to believe that a solution exists and that a resolution can be found to this conflict, which has already shed so much blood and taken so many lives. The Palestinian people have a right to self-determination, independence, peace and dignity. We believe that it is neither moral nor ethical to deny the right to freedom, peace and dignity to this extraordinary people.

Timor-Leste and the State of Israel have established diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level and will explore forms of mutually beneficial cooperation. Timor-Leste declares itself ready to recognize the State of Palestine and to establish diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level with the legitimate authorities of the Palestinian people.

Western Sahara is yet another entity that is regrettably excluded from most major international forums. Timor-Leste shares with our Saharawi brothers a remarkable amount of history. The inalienable right of the Saharawi people to self-determination was recognized by the United Nations eight years before that of Timor-Leste. Yet, while the case of Timor-Leste is now seen as a United Nations success story, that of Western Sahara continues to be stalled by successive obstacles. At this moment, when we are reaffirming our freedom and independence, we urge the resumption of the United Nations plan to hold a referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara. We can put an end to this unjust situation only if a fair, free and democratic consultation is held, such as that which took place in Timor-Leste.

The people of Timor-Leste also express their support for the peace process in Afghanistan and, in particular, for President Hamid Karzai, and we extend our wishes for success at this challenging time.

Recently, Timor-Leste attended the third Summit of African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) heads of State or Government, held in Fiji. This made us more aware of our need to actively participate in groups of developing countries that share common problems and similar advantages and backgrounds. There is much we can learn from and exchange with subregional partners within a group such as the ACP.

Regardless of our relationship with the Pacific, we are geographically close to South-East Asia and also feel proud of being part of that region. Over the past couple of years, we have intensified our contacts in the region. Today, we are pleased to testify to the committed work and unwavering commitment of our Asian brothers in the rebuilding of Timor-Leste, as well as with respect to the requests for peacekeeping forces and for various professional personnel made by the successive United Nations missions deployed in our country.

We recently participated in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ministerial meeting held in Brunei, and will continue to participate as invited observers in the organization's initiatives.

Last July, we became a full member of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, a group of countries that share a common language, history and culture which contributed to the shaping of our resistance identity. That is also a family of nations to which we are bound by ties of affection.

We join the world in its concerns at intolerance between cultures and religions and at the systematic use of violence, which cannot but breed misunderstanding and hatred, further distancing peoples and constraining dialogue.

We speak out, with the rest of the world, on the war on terrorism. Despite the enormous demands of our independence process and the developing nature of our country, we will not ease our vigilance and determination in uprooting the extremism and radicalism that promote or contribute to terror against innocents. Timor-Leste will never be a sanctuary for those who terrorize innocent civilians, whether on behalf of religion or ideology, or in any other guise.

We join the rest of the world in its commitment to fight against people-smuggling and the trafficking of arms and drugs. Transnational networks focusing on such repugnant activities have particularly affected our region. We will not permit our territory or our exclusive economic zone to be used to perpetuate the grief caused by the ambition of a few who hide behind profits made out of the misery of so many.

We join the rest of the world in its commitment to adopt comprehensive policies on the democratization of societies, the respect for civic and political rights, the need for good governance and the involvement of civil society, and on the adoption of stern policies against corruption. We join the rest of the world in its concern for the misery, hunger and disease in developing countries, which affect more than half of the planet's population.

There must be a steadfast commitment by the developing countries to adopt the correct policies to fight poverty. However, other important factors must be taken into account. We join those calling on the rich countries of the North to increase their contribution to overseas development assistance to at least 0.7 per cent of their gross national product. We join those calling for writing off the debt of the poor countries as an unavoidable measure. We join those calling for rescheduling the debt of the most heavily indebted countries, and investing part of the debt in education and public health. We join those calling for greater access to the markets of the rich countries, through the lifting of trade barriers and the easing and simplification of customs rules and regulations.

The European Union "everything but guns" cooperation policy is an example that should be followed by other rich countries. But the policy on agricultural subsidies has placed poorer countries at a great disadvantage and has left them in continued poverty. We, the poorest country in Asia, now also face the daunting challenge of globalization.

We have adopted a policy of reconciliation among all Timorese, based on justice. Nevertheless, to honour justice, our effort is focused on the eradication of all feelings of hatred and revenge, because sound reconciliation will come about only when there is greater social justice in Timorese society.

Our destiny is to live in peace. This means that we must, from the outset, lay the foundations of a new society where harmony, tolerance and solidarity prevail in the mind and spirit of every citizen. We are aware that we will be serving the interests of our people only if we honour our international commitments by signing the relevant conventions and treaties which not only

safeguard our sovereignty and our interests but also respect the sovereignty and interests of other peoples and States, particularly those of our region. I refer in particular to the Convention Against Torture, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and those on the use of chemical weapons, nuclear weapons and landmines.

As the people of the first new country of the millennium, and given the historic process leading to independence, the Maubere people are committed to social and economic development, to strengthening their culture and traditions and to being actively engaged in a policy of dialogue, cooperation and friendship with all the other peoples of the world. The people of Timor-Leste firmly believe in a future where world peace will reign. The people of Timor-Leste are convinced that peace has a price. That price is the freedom of people, tolerance among societies of different cultures and beliefs, and cooperation and friendship between peoples.

International Day of Peace, 21 September, was the dream come true of one man, and it shook the conscience of today's world, where humanity lives side by side with insecurity. We believe that peace is the most sacred objective of humanity. We urge all human beings — from the largest urban centres to remote farms and plantations, from social and professional organizations, artists and athletes to civil society and business people, from groups in conflict to politicians and cabinet members — to concentrate, together, greater energy on the need for peace in the world.

I wish to put forward a proposal to declare a World Peace Week, to be observed from 21 to 27 September each year. During that week, debates, conferences and workshops to discuss peace would be held throughout the world. Peace would no longer be a theoretical concept, but would rather be an issue for in-depth reflection on relevant themes such as poverty, democracy, human rights and justice. Thus, individuals would truly comprehend that genuine peace can emerge only from the peace within each citizen.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to my people. The international community, politicians and academics often speak of our country as a United Nations success story. The commitment of the international community — namely, the United Nations and its bodies the General Assembly and the Security Council — is unquestioned. That collective success is equally due to the role and the engagement of the United Nations specialized agencies, of the World Bank, of the International Monetary Fund and of the Asian Development Bank, as well as of the hundreds of United Nations Volunteers and international non-governmental organizations, in particular during the emergency and humanitarian relief periods. Today, we wish to express our recognition of, and our profound gratitude for, their commitment and their continued action in my country.

At the core of that success were, above all, our people. By refusing to go down the path of violence, even when provoked; by exercising their rights in a democratic and civic-minded manner, even if it meant risking their own lives; and by looking to the future with hope for the certainty of freedom, our people proved to the world that they were worthy of respect, and thus gained credibility and the admiration of all. We owe the success to which all were committed to the people of Timor-Leste.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Kay Rala Zanana Gusmão, President of the Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The President: I should like to inform Member States that the flag of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste will be raised at a ceremony that will take place in front of the delegates' entrance immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

Agenda item 117

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/57/429)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

> *The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 57/4).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 117.

Agenda item 15

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President: The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2002.

The five outgoing non-permanent members are the following: Colombia, Ireland, Mauritius, Norway and Singapore. Those five States cannot be re-elected. Their names, therefore, should not appear on the ballot papers.

Apart from the five permanent members, the Security Council will include in the year 2003 the following States: Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic. The names of those States, therefore, should also not appear on the ballot papers.

Of the five non-permanent members that will remain in office in the year 2003, three are from Africa and Asia, one is from Eastern Europe and one is from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Consequently, pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII) of 17 December 1963, the five non-permanent members should be elected according to the following pattern: two from Africa and Asia, one from Latin America and the Caribbean and two from Western Europe and other States. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

In accordance with established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that, of the two States to be elected from Africa and Asia, one should be from Africa and one from Asia.

I should like to inform the Assembly that those candidates, their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, that receive the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be declared elected.

In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

Regarding candidatures, I have been informed by the Chairmen of the respective regional groups of the following.

For the two vacant seats from among the African and Asian States, there are two endorsed candidates: Angola and Pakistan.

For the vacant seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, there is one endorsed candidate: Chile.

For the two vacant seats from among the Western European and other States, there are two endorsed candidates: Germany and Spain.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall proceed now to the election by secret ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "A", "B" and "C" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been distributed.

May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "A", for the African and Asian States, the names of the two States for which they wish to vote; on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote; and on the ballot papers marked "C", for the Western European and other States, the names of the two States for which they wish to vote.

A ballot paper containing more names from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it will be declared invalid. Names of Member States on a ballot paper which do not belong to that region will not be counted.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Luke Sookocheff (Canada), Mr. José Sosa (Dominican Republic), Mr. Kai Sauer (Finland), Mr. Gebhard Kandanga (Namibia), Mr. Faisal Al-Athba (Qatar) and Mr. Pavlo Orel (Ukraine) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

I now suspend the meeting for thirty minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 12.25 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African and Asian States

Number of ballot papers:	183
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	183
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	182
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Angola	181
Pakistan	172
India	1

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	183
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	183
Abstentions:	5
Number of members voting:	178
Required two-thirds majority:	119
Number of votes obtained:	
Chile	178

Group C — Western European and other States

Number of ballot papers:	183
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	183
Abstentions	0
Number of members voting:	183
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Germany	180
Spain	180

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, the following States were elected members of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning 1 January 2003: Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain.

The President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Security Council.

I would also like to thank the tellers for their assistance in the election.

We have thus concluded our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 15.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/INF/57/3, which contains a tentative programme of work and schedule of plenary meetings for the period from 27 September to 10 December 2002 and which has been distributed in the Hall.

I should also like to remind members that the list of speakers for items listed in document A/INF/57/3 are open. Furthermore, I should like to announce that the General Committee shall meet on Friday, 4 October, at 9.15 a.m., to consider a request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the fifty-seventh session which is contained in document A/57/232.

I will, in due course, keep the Assembly informed of any other additions or changes to the programme of work.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.